

FIGHT

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH . . . | TIMOTHY 6:12

2014
PRAYER
AND FASTING
JANUARY 6-10



We are calling on everyone to join our prayer and fasting. This is the time of year when we corporately consecrate ourselves, our families, and ministries to God. Believe God for victories and breakthroughs in every area of your life this year.

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PRAYER AND FASTING

... "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

JOSHUA 3:5

Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves through fasting and prayer. Fasting is a spiritual weapon God uses to advance His kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. There is something powerful that happens when we voluntarily humble ourselves, seek God's will, and agree with Him for His purposes to be fulfilled.

As a spiritual family, we begin each new year with a season of prayer and fasting. It is our way of humbling ourselves before God and consecrating to Him the upcoming year. It is also the time when we corporately come into agreement and believe together for breakthroughs in our personal lives, families, finances, and churches.

Over the years, as a result of this time of prayer, we have seen people receive healing, salvation, promotion, direction, family restoration, miraculous provision, and tremendous growth in their discipleship groups and churches. One of the highlights is always seeing and hearing testimonies of how God answers over and beyond what people ask.

As you begin your fast this year, believe in your heart, by faith, that this is your year of miracles and answered prayers.

WHY FAST?

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD. JOEL 1:14

When a man is willing to set aside the legitimate appetites of the body to concentrate on the work of praying, he is demonstrating that he means business, that he is seeking with all his heart, and will not let God go unless He answers.

• ARTHUR WALLIS

1. Jesus fasted.

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. MATTHEW 4:1,2

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. LUKE 4:14

Before He began His ministry, Jesus fasted forty days. He knew He was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us physically weak but spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

2. Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

... I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. ... PSALM 35:13

Humility results in the grace of God. When we humble ourselves in prayer, we have instant access to the heart of God. As we deny ourselves as an act of consecration, we are better able to exercise self-control. We can keep our emotions and desires under control.

3. Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ACTS 13:2

When we deny ourselves of our natural cravings, our spiritual antennas become sharper. We become more sensitive to His voice as we divest ourselves of worldly distractions. We are better able to focus on God and submit to His will. This opens the door for the Holy Spirit into our lives.

4. Fasting brings revival.

²... in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. ³So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. DANIEL 9:2,3

Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession. Daniel understood that Israel was headed for destruction. He also knew that in times like these, there is only one recourse—intercession through praying and fasting. Throughout human history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting.

5. Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Doctors consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. By learning to deny ourselves and exercising discipline, fasting breaks unhealthy addictions in our lives.

PREPARING TO FAST

Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us.

• BILL BRIGHT

"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." ESTHER 4:16

1. Be in faith!

Prayerfully and thoughtfully fill out the prayer points page of this guide. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Be clear and specific about your faith goals in your personal life, family, finances, and church. These are what you will be believing God for during the fast and the entire year. Expect God to answer. Maintain a thankful heart throughout and after the fast.

2. Commit to a type of fast.

We encourage everyone to commit to a "water only" or "liquid fast" during this season of prayer and fasting. However, we understand that some are unable to do so because of certain circumstances, such as pregnancy, a physically demanding profession, and medical conditions. If you belong to this category, there are alternatives—you may choose to do a combination fast. You may do a liquid fast for three days and then a one-meal-a-day fast for the next four, for example, or any other combination according to your need or situation. Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it. Do not decide on a day-to-day basis. Commit before the fast and be determined. Ask God for grace.

3. Plan your calendar.

Limit your physical and social activities during this period. You need to conserve physical energy and devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible.

4. Prepare spiritually.

More than anything, our annual fast is a time when we believe God for a fresh encounter with Him. Be prepared to have the Holy Spirit put His finger on an area in your life that needs to change. Repentance is the foundation of prayer and fasting. Be ready to repent and change, and be transformed. Surrender everything to Him. Be completely open.

5. Prepare physically.

Be smart as you enter into this fast. Do not go to a buffet restaurant on the eve of the fast, hoping to stock up on food in your body. The key is to gradually prepare your body. Start eating smaller portions and meals seven days before you begin your fast. Avoid food that is high in sugar and fat. Two days prior to the fast, eat raw fruit and vegetables only. Consult a physician if you need to.

DURING THE FAST

The record of the whole Bible indicates that prayer and fasting combined constitute the strongest weapon committed to God's believers.

• DR. MARY RUTH SPOWE

¹⁶"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." MATTHEW 6:16-18

1. Seek the Lord.

Commit to prayer and Bible reading the times you usually allocate for meals. Join at least one prayer meeting in your local church. There will be daily prayer meetings scheduled in every local church throughout the fast. Call the nearest church for their schedule. Be ready to respond when you hear from God.

This guide also has a devotional that we encourage you to go through during the fast.

2. Commit to change.

Whatever God tells you or puts His finger upon, apply it immediately. If you need to make restitution, immediately contact people you have broken relationships with. If there are habits that need to change, make the adjustment immediately. Ask your group leader to hold you accountable.

3. Practical tips

- Avoid medical and even natural herbal drugs. However, if you are under medication, these should only be withdrawn upon the advice of your doctor.
- Limit your physical activity and exercise. If you have a workout routine, adjust it accordingly. A daily two to five kilometer walk should be your maximum amount of exercise during an extended fast.
- Rest as much as you can.
- Maintain an attitude of prayer throughout the day. Intercede for your family, pastors, church, nation, our missionaries, world missions, etc.
- Drink plenty of clean water.
- As your body adjusts, be prepared for temporary bouts of physical weakness as well as mental annoyances like impatience, irritability, and anxiety.

BREAKING THE FAST

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. ACTS 14:23

If our fasting is not unto God, we have failed. Physical benefits, success in prayer, the enduring with power, spiritual insights—these must never replace God as the center of our fasting.

• RICHARD FOSTER

1. Reintroduce solid food gradually.

You should break your fast the same way you prepared for it. It will take your body just as many days you fasted to adjust to a normal diet. Begin eating gradually. Don't eat solid food immediately after your fast. Start with fruits, juices, and salad. Then, you can begin adding vegetables and boiled potato. Take it slowly from there. Eat small portions spread throughout the day.

2. Continue praying.

Don't let your prayer life end on the day you finish the fast. Build from the momentum you gained during the fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the year.

3. Be expectant.

Be in faith and believe God to answer your prayers soon! Don't give up, persevere in prayer even if you don't see the answers immediately. Make sure you keep the copy of your prayer points. You can check it at the end of the year and see how God has answered your prayers. It can be your thanksgiving list at the end of the year.

CONCLUSION

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . . EPHESIANS 3:20

Our annual prayer and fasting gives us the opportunity to realign our lives according to His will and consecrate the coming year to Him. As we humble ourselves corporately to Him in prayer, we can expect Him to move mightily in our midst. God's will is for all of us to experience breakthrough and victory in our lives. Be in faith for God to move miraculously in your life this year beyond what you can ask or imagine. You have a fresh mandate. Be ready to accomplish greater things for God this year!



The Belt of Truth

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist . . . EPHESIANS 6:14

READ

Psalms 51:6 • Psalm 86:11 • John 1:17 • John 8:31,32 • Ephesians 6:10-14

Spiritual conflict is a reality all disciples will face in the course of following Jesus. The Apostle Paul warns us that we have spiritual enemies who will oppose us as we live for Christ and obey His command to make disciples of all nations. The good news, however, is that God has provided spiritual weapons by which we can overcome all the schemes of the devil.

Ephesians 6:10,11 tells us to "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power," and to "put on the full armor of God." We must realize that we battle from a position of strength and power through Christ, who already triumphed over all powers and authorities by the cross (Colossians 2:15). We want to understand and appropriate this full armor in this time of prayer and fasting, believing that we will experience His victory in our lives throughout this year!

In the ancient world, a Roman soldier's belt not only kept his armor in place, but it was wide enough to protect his kidneys and other vital organs. Likewise, the truth of God's Word protects us and prepares us to fight the good fight of faith. The belt of truth needs to be put on tightly and securely in order for us to fight efficiently.

Jesus identified the devil as the "father of lies" (John 8:44), and deception is one of the enemy's oldest schemes (Genesis 3:13). We can discern and deflect Satan's lies by holding them against the truth of God's Word.

The belt of truth keeps us secure in Christ and makes effective all the other pieces of armor—it holds the whole armor in place. As we prepare for this year's prayer and fasting, let us commit ourselves to live in the light of God's truth daily.

REFLECT

Based on John 1:17, where does truth come from?

- What did Jesus say we must do so that we can know the truth (John 8:31,32)? What is the result of knowing the truth?

RESPOND

- Ask God to reveal some lies of the enemy you may have believed that need to be replaced with the truth. Spend some time searching the Scriptures and praying.
- Regularly reading the Word creates a reservoir of truth in our lives. On a scale of one to ten, rate yourself on how consistently you read your Bible (ten for daily and one for rarely/not consistent). Make the necessary adjustments and ask God for grace to be consistent in your Bible reading (Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8).



The Breastplate of Righteousness

... with the breastplate of righteousness
in place ... EPHESIANS 6:14

READ

Isaiah 61:10,11 • 2 Corinthians 5:21 • Ephesians 4:20-24 • Philippians 3:9

Ancient soldiers wore a breastplate covering their chest to protect their heart and body from the lunging swords and flying arrows. A soldier wearing a breastplate goes into battle with courage and confidence. The breastplate of righteousness protects our hearts from the accusations of the enemy, such as lies, fears, and condemnation for our sins (Revelation 12:10).

We cannot become righteous through our own good works. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, His righteousness was credited to us (Romans 4:24-5:1). We can only pray and come to God with confidence when we are aware and convinced of the righteousness that we have in Christ (Hebrews 4:16). The breastplate of righteousness is Christ's righteousness in us—our holy standing before God that produces righteous and holy living.

REFLECT

- According to 2 Corinthians 5:21, who is the worker and giver of righteousness? What is our part (Ephesians 4:24)?

- How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness (Philippians 3:9)?

RESPOND

- What thoughts or feelings may hinder you from living out the truth of your righteousness in Christ? Ask someone more spiritually mature, such as your Victory group leader, to pray with you.
- What are some things you do that make you feel or think that you are getting closer to God? Stop trusting in these things for your righteousness. Rely only on Christ and His finished work on the cross.

DAY 2 Shoes with the Gospel of Peace

... and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

EPHESIANS 6:15

READ

Isaiah 52:7 • Isaiah 61:1,2 • Romans 1:16,17 • Romans 10:13-15

Shoes enable soldiers to stride freely and assertively as they fix their full attention on the battle in front of them. The correct footwear assists their movement.

Part of the Christian soldier's necessary equipment is the readiness at any moment to share the Good News of salvation that will reconcile a sinner to God. The gospel shoes represent the willingness to obey the Holy Spirit whenever He leads us to speak the Good News of salvation. In order to have more opportunities to share the Good News, we have to live in peace with all men (Romans 12:18). We should build rapport with those who need to hear the gospel. Peace with God and peace with others gives us a firm footing, like sturdy shoes with soles that will not slip or slide.

REFLECT

- What should we do with the peace we have, according to Isaiah 52:7?

- How can we be more prepared to share the Good News of salvation that will bring peace in others' lives?

RESPOND

- Pray for two to three persons you know who need to hear the gospel. Spend time praying for them with your Victory group.
- Share the gospel regularly. Tell His story to three people this week.

DAY 3

The Shield of Faith

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. EPHESIANS 6:16

READ

Habakkuk 2:3,4 • Romans 10:8,17 • Hebrews 11:1-6 • 1 John 5:4,5

The shield defends the soldier's body and armor. The shield of a Roman soldier referred to here was about two and a half feet wide and four and a half feet long, made of solid wood, and covered with metal or leather. In New Testament times, the wooden shield was covered with leather in order to quickly quench the arrows that were sent the soldier's way. These arrows were usually dipped in pitch and set on fire, but a proper shield could protect the soldier well.

The soldiers in battle stood side-by-side with their shields together. They formed a long protective wall or a rectangular formation, giving them complete protection from all sides. In an ambush or aerial attack, the soldiers would duck behind their shields to protect themselves from enemy spears or flaming arrows.

The shield of faith is meant to extinguish all of Satan's flaming arrows, including doubt, confusion, disillusionment, self-pity, and fear. Satan shoots doubt at us, for example, when we don't receive answers to our prayers as we expected. But our faith in God's faithfulness is based on the indisputable truth of the Scriptures. God keeps His promises and fulfills His Word. We are to keep our shields held high, knowing that our Father in heaven protects, preserves, and provides for His children.

REFLECT

Where does faith come from (Romans 10:17)? Are you growing in faith? Why or why not?

- How can you and your household grow more in your faith in God? How can you help your friends grow in faith?

RESPOND

- Choose two or three Bible verses that speak about God's promise for you about your situation or need. Meditate on and memorize the verses.
- Declare and claim by faith God's blessings and favor in your life and upon your family. Practice proclaiming this aloud in a private place regularly.

DAY 4 The Helmet of Salvation

Take the helmet of salvation . . . EPHESIANS 6:14

READ

Psalms 27:1; 140:7 • Isaiah 59:17 • Ephesians 2:4-9 • 1 Thessalonians 5:8,9

The helmet protected a Roman soldier's head from injury or a crushing blow from an attacking opponent. It was the most obvious and decorative piece of the armor. It was designed so that enemy attacks and blows toward the head would be deflected. It also allowed the soldier maximum visibility while having his head protected.

Satan's prime target is our mind, and lies are his topmost weapon. The enemy tries to make us doubt God and our salvation. The helmet is designed to protect the mind—the believer's ability to think and reason. The helmet of salvation protects our minds from doubting the truth of God's saving work for us.

The helmet of salvation is a precious piece of armor for the children of God. It cost Jesus His life. We should be constantly aware of the final and complete sacrifice of Christ that secured our everlasting salvation.

REFLECT

How is God described in Psalm 140:7? What does this imply about our relationship with Him?

- Spiritually speaking, why do you think the head needs protection?

RESPOND

- Ask the Lord to search your mind and reveal to you some thought patterns or mindsets that He wants to change. Pray for transformation (Romans 12:2).
- Find a more mature disciple and share some of the thoughts you commonly struggle with. Ask for prayer in this area.

DAY 5 The Sword of the Spirit

... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. EPHESIANS 6:17

READ

Psalms 19:7-11 • Jeremiah 23:29 • Matthew 4:1-11 • Hebrews 4:12

The sword is the only weapon of offense in the armor, but it can also be used for defense. Arrogant arguments, humanistic philosophies, and negative thoughts are weapons that the enemy uses against believers (2 Corinthians 10:4,5; Colossians 2:8). God's people take up the sword of the Spirit as they use the Word of God to capture these thoughts and make them obedient to Christ.

Jesus was tempted thrice by the devil while He was fasting in the desert. In each of those temptations, Christ overcame Satan by speaking the Word of God.

REFLECT

- In Jeremiah 23:29, the Word of God is likened to two things. What are these and what do these analogies imply?

- Which of the descriptions of the Word of God in Hebrews 4:12 makes the most impact in your present situation? Why?

RESPOND

- Seek God for a timely word for a family member or friend. Pray and seek counsel about how and when to speak it.
- Memorizing Bible verses allows you to easily draw from Scripture in times of spiritual conflict. Choose a day or two of the week to memorize one Bible verse. Pray for grace and wisdom to do this regularly.

This year, I am believing God for . . .

Personal Faith Goals

Spiritual Revival • Physical Healing • Prosperity and Abundance • Rich Generosity

My Family

Restoration of Relationships • Household Salvation

My School/Career

Excellence • Promotion

My Ministry

Victory Group Growth • Salvation of Colleagues, Classmates, Bosses, Employees

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." MATTHEW 18:19

PRAYER PARTNER

SCHEDULE

1

Fasting Options

- ☐ Water fast
- ☐ Liquid fast
- ☐ Eat one meal only
- ☐ Others:

Prayer meeting to attend:

2

Fasting Options

- ☐ Water fast
- ☐ Liquid fast
- ☐ Eat one meal only
- ☐ Others:

Prayer meeting to attend:

3

Fasting Options

- ☐ Water fast
- ☐ Liquid fast
- ☐ Eat one meal only
- ☐ Others:

Prayer meeting to attend:

4

Fasting Options

- ☐ Water fast
- ☐ Liquid fast
- ☐ Eat one meal only
- ☐ Others:

Prayer meeting to attend:

5

Fasting Options

- ☐ Water fast
- ☐ Liquid fast
- ☐ Eat one meal only
- ☐ Others:

Prayer meeting to attend:

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